The Times-Dispatch

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FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1913.

DECORATING LIFE BY PLAY.

At last Richmond is to have a real playground, equipped and directed along scientific lines. The director of public recreation is to receive $2,000, which is a good way of emphasizing the importance of the step. The men who for long and weary months have labored to get money from the Council, and then to have this money spent in the best way, deserve the hearty gratitude of children and parents. They have made a dream come true. The first large playground on Chimborazo Park will be a model. It is to show to Richmond what can be done in the line of guided recreation for young people. We trust that what happened in Chicago will happen here. The regions of that city that did not get playgrounds raised such a rumpus about the injustice done their children that the city authorities had to extend the recreation system through the entire city. It is up to the West End and the Southside and the negroes to demand similar centres for pleasure in their sections.

We expect more than play from this initial experiment in community recreation. This spot should be a centre for a better life. It should help the young in body and morals, and as soon as possible it should extend its care to the older people, who are often as sadly in need of amusement as are the children. The wide and splendid scope of the recreation movement will be made clear to Richmond at the Congress of the National Playground Association next week. The fundamental ideal of the movement is "A Life Rather Than a Living." It believes in a decorated and beautiful existence, not a mere barren monotony of sleep and toil. It aims to teach the right use of leisure time.

The program itself proves how vital are the interests of recreation. We list some topics to be discussed: "Recreation for Business Men," "Saving the Beaches for the People," "The Best Form of Play for Adults," "What Makes a Successful Evening Recreation Centre," "The Story-Telling Movement," "Festivals in the Community Life," "Children's Gardens," "Municipal Summer Camps," "Winter Sports," "Swimming Pools and Public Baths," "Play for Crippled Children, for the Blind and in Insane Asylums," "Rural Recreation in Country Schools," "Country Folk Songs," "The Rural Pageant" and "The County Fair."

All this means more than the old idea of play, which was mostly violent running and yelling in some ancient game. This kind of play cultivates more than the body. It teaches love of beauty, of nature, of social amusements. It cares for the health and helps make light the hours of those who are disabled. It is limited to no class or sex or age. It recognizes the divine need in every human for some form of social pleasure. The name play here means all the other things besides work that can make living an exhilarating pleasure. Richmond can well learn of what is being done throughout the world to employ the increasing leisure of the human race.

"HOTHOUSE ATHLETICISM."

Is baseball harmful to the spectator? "There is nothing in this hothouse form of athleticism, and the less we have of it the better," avers Dr. Dudley A. Sargent, physical director of Harvard University, and the original "Uncle Dud." He is of the opinion that the baseball "fan" and "fannie" are products of a radically wrong attitude toward athletics. The onlooker at the national game, he says, is in danger of harmful excess, if not of immorality.

"The excitement attending ball games as they are played at present is harmful," Dr. Sargent opines. "Our baseball fans nowadays are devotees of a game in exactly the same sense as are those fascinated by watching a roulette game or other games of chance. Attendance at these games means that thousands of men and boys and even women become unduly excited over the athletic prowess of professional players. They leave the ball grounds with nerves tingling and spirits exalted if the game goes well, and the question is, what outlet do those men and women find for their emotions thus aroused? I am tempted to leave the subject with an interrogation point."

The chief charge that Dr. Sargent makes against baseball is that it arouses emotion in the spectator without furnishing a "motor outlet." This would not be the case "if the game were actually played instead of watched," because "we are overdoing one phase of the so-called love of sport."

The criticism is the creature of theory. If any "motor outlet" is necessary, is it not found in the inevitable discussion that follows the game? Isn't the post-mortem enough? As a matter of fact, baseball is really most helpful to the spectator, especially if he or she be tired from the cares of the earlier part of the day. The game amuses and entertains, driving from the brain the worries that flesh is heir to. It gives a change of thought and a change of scene. What greater relief from the worry of the world is there than in watching sound-bodied, strong-limbed men playing upon the green the most scientific and best of athletic games?

THE HARVEST OF LAWS.

More than 16,000 statutes are annually enacted by the Legislatures of the United States. Thirty-nine such law-making bodies have been in session in 1913, and, while their output of acts has been as large as usual, the percentage of good general laws has been very small. Progressive legislation has made decided gains, although many wise measures failed of passage. The Legislatures of Florida, Illinois and New York are still in session.

The 1913 session of the Wyoming Legislature was "a good deal of a failure," in the opinion of Governor Carey, who is remembered in Richmond as the member of the Governors' Conference here last fall who called Governor Blease, of South Carolina, down. The Wyoming Assembly, limited by law to a forty-day session, killed practically all the good measures presented for its consideration, among the best of which was a blue sky law to protect the people from the swindles of promoters doing business under the corporation laws of the State.

The most important act of the Kansas Legislature was that providing for the State publication of school text-books and their distribution by the State at actual cost. The most important measure failing of passage was a resolution submitting to the people the right to vote upon the initiative and the referendum.

Delaware's legislators passed a simplified ballot law embodying the short ballot principle, a ten-hour law for women and a child labor law, and refused to enact an employers' liability law and a public utilities commission bill.

West Virginia's most important enactment was a public utilities commission act, while measures establishing primary elections and securing conservation of the State's natural resources failed.

Indiana points to a public service commission law as its best new law. A workmen's compensation law was left upon the calendar.

Maine's most progressive statutes of the year are a public service commission and workmen's compensation act.

North Dakota contented itself with a blue sky law very much like the one which Wyoming refused to place upon its statute books.

A State tax commission was created by the Montana Legislature, which also submitted to the people an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women, provided for suspended sentences in the cases of first offenders, established a nine-hour workday for women wage earners, and adopted a blue sky law. A workmen's compensation law was refused legislative approval.

North Carolina's most important addition to her laws was a measure providing for a six months' public school. Of almost as much value was the passage of a resolution providing for the appointment of a committee to consider amendments to the State Constitution. The findings of this body are to be reported to an extra session of the General Assembly, to be called in the latter part of this year or the first part of 1914. Measures providing for the reassessment for taxation of the property of the State and for a legalized primary did not pass.

Idaho was the second State this year to create a State tax commission. It also enacted a law creating a State board of control for educational institutions, a law establishing a State highway commission and providing a bond issue for highway purposes, a blue sky law like that of Kansas, a mothers' pension law and a nine-hour day for women statute. A workmen's compensation bill failed, but as a method of finding a permanent solution of the matter a commission was appointed to study the question and report to the next Legislature. This commission consists of one member of each house of the Legislature, two representatives of labor and two of capital.

Arkansas enrolled itself as progressive by establishing a State board of health and bureau of vital statistics, by enacting a comprehensive law for the regulation of banks and banking, by creating a highway department and State highway commission, by creating a bureau of labor and labor statistics, by enacting a corrupt practices act and a blue sky law. A new revenue law providing for the better assessment of property and a State-wide game law did not pass.

The general attitude of these Legislatures is typical of all. Progressive policies are confronted with much opposition and in many cases are checked, but they are gaining strength with each successive session. Workmen's compensation, for instance, is not easily securing entrance into the statute books, but every agitation upon the issue increases its momentum. The Legislatures of the nation, regarded as a whole, make haste slowly; they are in no sense radical.

DR. ELIOT ON JAPANESE.

Dr. Charles W. Eliot, who is in many ways the first citizen of this nation, feels that "the American people as a whole need all the trustworthy information they can get about the qualities of the Japanese people and the tendencies of this newcomer among the world powers." We agree that this is by all odds the first need of the situation, and are glad to print some of Dr. Eliot's beliefs from the New York Times.

He deems the Japanese different from other Oriental races, as evidenced by the marvelous rapidity with which they have seized on Western civilization and turned it to their own good. Their past achievements since 1860 prove that they possess as a race "fine physical, mental and moral qualities." He strikes the keynote of the situation in the sentence: "Their dominant sentiment is an intense patriotism, in which pride, loyalty and love are ardently united." It seems clear that much of their objection to the California legislation arises from a sense of injury to their national name and honor, and not from any desire to encroach upon the Pacific States.

This is borne out by other generalizations by Dr. Eliot. They are not a numerous people, and they are not a warlike people. Their wars have been the defensive efforts of a small nation to keep from being crushed rather than a search for aggrandizement by arms. They are a homing people in this keen observer's pleasant phrase. They go far in trading and adventure, but are not colonists. The Japanese government is even now having trouble getting settlers for Korea. In addition, it is so heavily in debt for past wars that an additional burden would break the people's back.

Particularly interesting to students of the Southern race problem in their efforts to keep the blood pure is the statement that the Japanese do not intermarry with women other than their own race. The inexpedient crossing of races will not be promoted by Japanese.

From all of these premises, Dr. Eliot draws this conclusion, which we offer, not as final, but as the opinion of a wise and honest student of great problems:

"The objection to the proposed law in California is that it manifests in an ignorant way an ungenerous and selfish temper, and offers a senseless affront to a sensitive and friendly people, whose rapid progress toward constitutional government and national independence all Americans ought to admire and praise."

THE TIMES-DISPATCH SCHOOL OF POETS AND CRITICS.

Here is ignorance for you! It is a question to the editor: "In an editorial in your paper some time ago you mentioned The Times-Dispatch School of Poets and Critics. Is it an organization to which I could refer, or is it an informal kind of brotherhood?"

Everybody ought to know the School by this time. It is an organization, and you can refer anything on top of the earth to the members with a fair chance of getting some light in return. Yet, even more, it is an informal kind of brotherhood. We have to thank our questioner for that nice definition. It is a brotherhood (with some sisters) of amiable persons who love the noble English language and what can be expressed therein. It meets in that democratic stadium of intellectual sports, the Voice of the People Column. It has but one qualification for membership—that what you say be interesting. It seeks amusement and culture, and the preservation of those gentle virtues, love of beauty and love of truth. You can rhyme it, or plod in pedestrian prose; you can be sentimental or satiric; you can be serious or funny, or try to be serious and succeed in being funny. You must be interesting.

There is that good illegible poet, Duval Porter, from that nook in Virginia, of which the very name is lyrical. We mean Cascade. Noting, as is the wont of the brotherhood, our lament about quiescent spring poets, he sends a bit of Cascade moonlight, with this charming note: "I send you a spring poem suggested by a little white rosebush in my front yard. This I trust you will publish and thereby break the vernal poetical silence."

That hits the spirit of the T.-D. school. They are the people who have beautiful thoughts suggested by the little white rosebush in the front yard. They enjoy this garden world, and want to share it with others. So they write and we print, and both feel better all over for doing so.

There is Frank Monroe Beverley, of the sweet figures and the tempestuous lines; there is that valiant Crusader of the Single Tax, who hides his ancient and honorable name under the poetical heraldry of "Piedmont." He has so much to tell people that he signs his name with a rubber stamp in red ink. The red symbolizes the blood of the race to which Piedmont is so devoted that he wants to lift off all the burdens of taxation and put them on the ground. He just loves folks. Then there are Charles Macon Wesson and ex-Private Turpin, both racy and full of wisdom that comes from long living close to the heart of things.

The Critics are the fellows who find fault with the poets, or with anything else that displeases them. They are our Attic salt. The little essay in faultless English from Heileman Wilson's subtle pen won him a place, and the letter we publish to-day from Willis Pepoon pays his initiation fee, even if there had been any doubt after the poesy of his name. He rebukes the dictionary in deft phrase and declares: "At the college where I imbibed the pabulum of approved English, we were not only taught to place the accent upon the first syllable of the word 'op-ponent,' but to place it upon the second syllable of the word 'contro-versy.'" See how naturally he picks out the words that indicate his disputatious turn of mind?

If you want to know more of them, read the daily offering. You will find beauty and charity and sweetness. You will find simplicity and gentleness and reverence. You will find faith and courage. You will find the fragrance from the little blue flower of love of life and men.

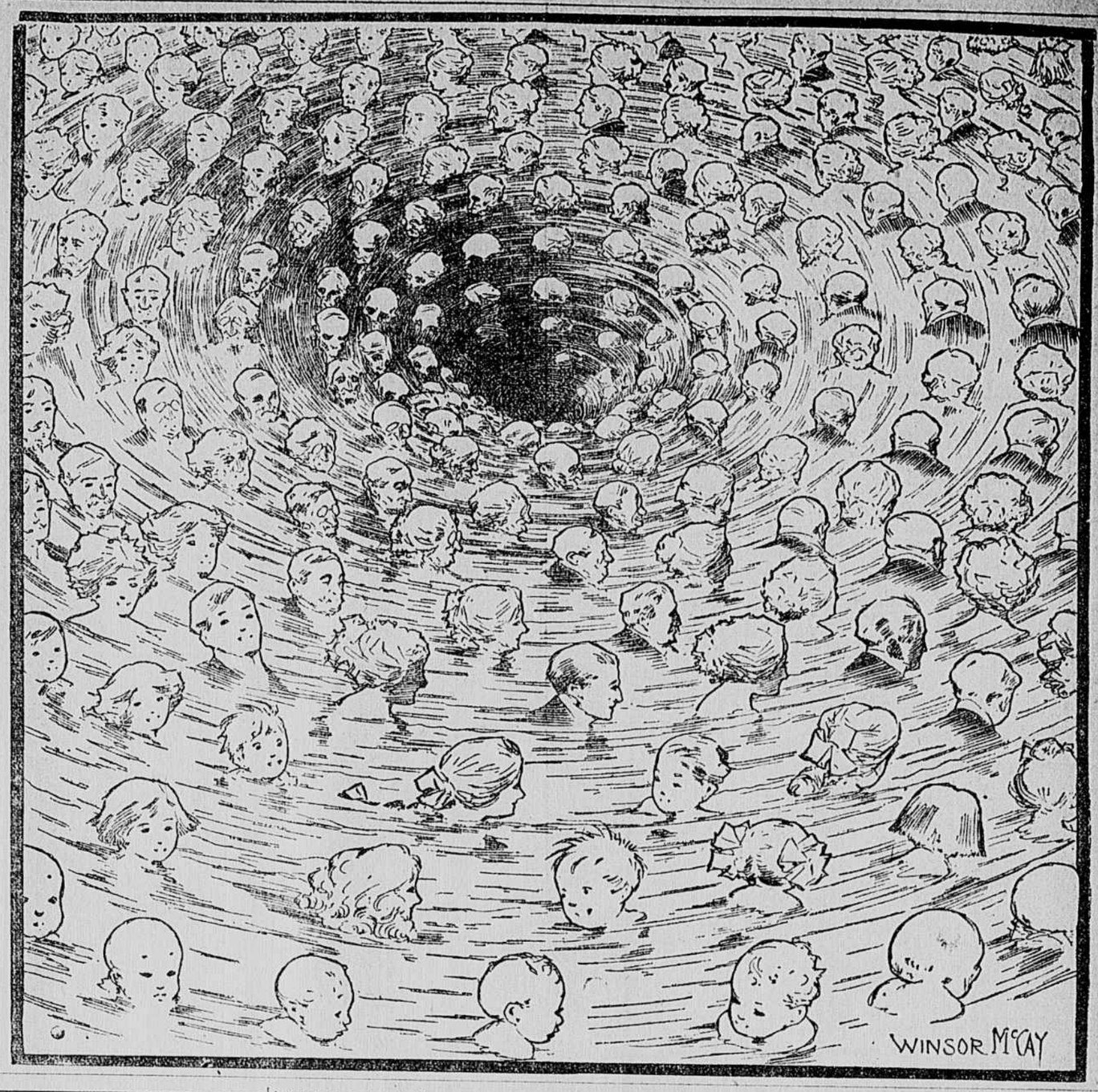
It's nice weather to study annexation from a motor car.

Buttermilk is what ought to be served at diplomatic dinners. Everybody who drinks experiences immediate exhilaration and there is no "hangover."

Paris waiters have, through a strike, won the right to eat at other places than where they wait. When they go elsewhere, will they tip the waiters serving them?

The Prince of Wales will visit Canada early next year. A word to the Richmond Chamber of Commerce is sufficient.

THE WHIRLPOOL OF LIFE



On the Spur of the Moment

By Roy K. Moulton

Don't Do It.

One poor deluded mortal tried to figure
out the scheme,
The old scheme of existence, and it
was his one pet dream
That some day he would solve it, and
that he would rise to Fame;
And that the countless millions would
his mastery proclaim.
He tried to figure how some folks could
always get along,
And never do a stroke of work and
never get in wrong;
How they could wear the finest clothes
and eat the finest fare
Without a cent of income of which
neighbors were aware.
He couldn't dope their system out. He
tried with might and main,
But had to give it up at last, his efforts
were in vain.
He tried to figure how it was that
crooks seemed to succeed
While honest folks failed frequently
and were sometimes in need.
He figured on for many years, his fate
is sad to tell.
They say that he's still figuring, but
in a padded cell.

From the Hickeyville Clarion.

Lemuel Higgins is thinking some of sending his daughter to a finishing school, but Ame Hilliker advises him not to. Ame says when he sent his daughter to a finishing school it was his finish and not his daughter's.

Ansel Hanks has begun takin' lessons on the slide trombone and practicin' at home, and all the neighbors have begun getting phonographs in self-defense.

Since Lem Tubbs held the office of notary public in our village and got a taste of politics he ain't fit fer work of any kind.

I see that Alfred Vanderbilt has got a suit of clothes for every day in the year. So have I, and it is the same one.

They say that there is nothing impossible in this world, but I would like to know how in tophet it is possible to get out of payin' a gas bill.

Ansel Bird has been working all winter making an oatmobile for himself, and if he kin succeed in puttin' a mortgage on his remaining forty acres he may be able to buy enough gasolene to run it for a week or two.

Rev. Hudnutt says he hopes some day to git his church choir in such a frame of mind that at least two members of it will speak to each other. If he does he claims that his many years in the ministry will not be in vain.

Lem Higgins says he hopes to live long enough to git the tariff straightened out in his own mind, but he must expect to beat Methuselah's record by several years.

The mud puddle which has stood in Main Street in front of the post-office for several years will be moved onto a back street this spring. It will be soaked up in sponges and squeezed out when a proper site for it is found. Let the improvements go on.

Every time the price of gasolene goes up, Mr. and Mrs. Ansel Hanks put another mortgage on their forty to keep the car goin'.

A feller with a celluloid nose ain't got no business foolin' around a cigar lighter.

What has become of the old-fashioned feller who used to git arrested for drivin' or ridin' a hoss across a bridge faster than a walk?

There is a feller in this town who claims that he bought an ombreller once, but nobuddy kin accuse him of bein' a liar, bekuz he hasn't lived here very long.

There are plenty of ways to be onhappy without gettin' into an argument with a woman.

Elihu Purdy, our gentlemanly and genial druggist, expects to put in a full line of oatmobile accessories, as they are about the only things he does not keep at present, excepting drugs.

One of the few fellers in this world who have made a success of whiskers is John Phillip Sousa.

Dad.

Dad is an old-fashioned sport.
Has no manners of the court.
Likes to eat in his shirt sleeves
Every meal, and he believes
He should say just what he thinks
Spite of mother's nudge and winks.
He is not well versed in Greek;
Plain old Yankee does he speak.
And his rules of etiquette—
They have not been published yet.
You can always hear him chew;
Drinks out of his sasser, too,
And he doesn't mind a bit
When you call him down for it.
Takes old-fashioned remedy
For what ails him. Says that he
Can't see much in this "new thought,"
Though of course, he ought.
He's not very long on style
And he wears no fine silk tile.
Interest in art to him
Is naught but a silly whim.
He's more taken up with cooks
Than with music or with books.
Polish is not in his line,
But, I'll tell you, friends of mine,
When I'm lookin' for a V,
Dad looks mighty good to me.

Voice of the People

High Culture and the Dictionaries.

To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir,—I notice in the Sunday's issue of The Times-Dispatch an editorial headed "Our Stepmother Tongue," in which the writer deplores the fact that greater liberty is taken with our English at the present day than formerly, and mentions as an example that certain cultured Virginians say "op-ponent" for "oppo-nent." This is, of course, contrary to the dictionaries which are in general use, and yet, at the college where I imbibed the pabulum of approved English we were not only taught to place the accent upon the first syllable of the word "op-ponent," but to place it upon the second syllable of the word "contro-versy." It thus appears that the leaders of high culture and our dictionaries do not always agree. What would a Virginian say were he called down for pronouncing the word "accessories" as it is given in the dictionary? And yet the students in at least one Northern college are taught to pronounce this word "ak-essories." The Greeks lived without grammars, dictionaries or spelling-books, and developed a high grade of civilization. Max Mueller says of our present-day languages that they have been stultified and fossilated by our dictionaries and grammars, and that no living language can afford to be controlled by such standards. If language is to evolve freely and grow with our growing civilization, perhaps after all there is some truth in this great philologist's statement.

WILLIS PEPOON.

April 28, 1913.

School Superintendents and Citizenship.

To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir,—Under the caption, "School Officials Must Be Citizens," in your issue of yesterday, there is one statement that I hope will be given the greatest publicity. That statements reads as follows:

"In fact, members of that body had hoped the question would not be raised, in which event the board would have elected outsiders to be superintendents where new men are wanted by the people."

I ask that the people of Virginia be given the authority for that statement because I believe it will be of value to them. Let us know what members of the board had such hopes. The opinion of the Attorney-General had been given in writing to others weeks before it was given to me. I have talked to members of the board, and they knew of his ruling before I ever did. Who is it that did not know that he had given in writing his ruling and that he had stated that he would so rule at the meeting of the board? I have information that will convince that one that this had been done.

I have in mind the case of an experienced superintendent who has demonstrated his efficiency in another State, and who was induced to decline offers out of this, his native State, so that he might serve us as superintendent in a division where there is no trained man. The Attorney-General had written him the same decision that he has written me. This man now resides in a division where the present incumbent is efficient as superintendent. Two good men in one division! Another division has no good man. Must it be that the good man will be without a job and the good job be without a man?

WM. HOLMES DAVIS,
Headmaster, the Danville School.

N. B.—Please note that I am not connected with the Danville public schools. This is a private school.

Views of the Virginia Editors

Let the Schools Alone.

It is rather surprising to see a newspaper such as the Richmond Evening Journal advocate the election of school superintendents. It recommended that proposition to the consideration o fthe Conference for Education in the South, in session at Richmond.

If there is any one thing that tends more than all others combined to the perpetuation of the notorious inefficiency of a State government such as Virginia suffers under, it would seem to us to be the absurd extent to which popular election to minor offices is carried in this Commonwealth. It is bad enough to have the Superintendent of Public Instruction elected by popular vote instead of appointed by the Governor, as he should be. But to have a newspaper at the State capital, that claims to stand for effective government, seriously advocate choosing school officials by popular ballot is disheartening to those who are working for centralization.

What does the average voter know about the qualifications of a school superintendent? Nothing. That is no reflection on the average man. It is simply a recognition of the limits to which his interest is naturally confined.

How can the State ever hope to have a strong, effective, efficient school system, developed on a single comprehensive scheme of education, if the responsibility for such a plan is to be scattered further than at present? If each local superintendent is to be accountable only to the community from which he is elected, what interest will he take in developing the schools under his guidance along the lines laid down by what should be the headquarters of the school system of the State, at Richmond?

There is scarcely a rural community in Virginia, and not many towns, that could find a competent school superintendent among its own residents. If the office were elective, it would be practically impossible to go outside such a restricted area to find a suitable official.

Alexandria County schools never saw the light of day until they passed under a superintendent from another part of the State. That awakening would not have been here yet, if the office were still a refuge for some favorite son.—Alexandria County Monitor.

Against Conventions.

Governor Sulzer is doing a good work in urging upon the New York Legislature a thoroughgoing and honest primary bill. It is the first essential of good government. If the nominating machinery is in the hands of the bosses, the people are powerless, because they have only a choice of machine-made candidates.

The New York Governor goes further and favors the total abolition of State conventions, and there is no doubt he is in line with the most patriotic opinions of the country. In practically all the States in which there has been any real primary election reform the State convention is a thing of the past.

There are, of course, plenty of plausible reasons that may be advanced for the retention of the convention. In some instances, they have accomplished good, but in the main they have been gatherings composed mostly of hand-picked delegates, chosen by well understood gang methods, and either driven or tricked into carrying out the will of the machine leaders. If it did not lend itself so completely to the sinister purposes of the boodle politicians, they would not be so unanimous in all parties and in all States for its preservation.

The swapping, log-rolling, corrupt bargaining—not to mention cruder methods—that prevail at State conventions would shock the people of any State if they were fully known. Senator La Follette tells of one State convention in Wisconsin at which a member of the United States Senate bought delegates at prices varying from $70 to $700 a head. In most conventions, of course, votes are not directly bought with cash, but with its equivalent—offices that pay money in salary and business advantages that yield money in profits.

There is a notion that conventions breed party harmony and good fellowship. On the contrary, they usually beget strife and bad blood. In Virginia there are many men who still smart from treatment they received at conventions twenty years ago. The reason is that convention methods are seldom fair, and nothing arouses personal and political rancor like unfairness.

The strongest argument presented in favor of conventions is that they give a chance to the mass of the party to formulate a platform, but as a rule the platform is the work of a few men and they might as well frame it without the convention's aid. Besides, few politicians pay any attention to party platforms. In the primaries the candidates make their own platforms and they make them to suit the people. Only the machine politicians and the interests object to platforms made in that manner.—Alexandria News.

Abe Martin

Aaron Hemingway wuz appointed pustmaster yisterday without ever havin' held a Roman candle in his hand. Th' only time you ever see some fellers is in a pe-rade.